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## *Between Hauntology and Entology: Hélène Cixous and the nature of 'mdeilmm' in Mdeilmm: Parole de Taupe*

*Tra Spettrologia ed Entologia: Hélène Cixous e la natura di 'mdeilmm' in Mdeilmm: Parole de Taupe*

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### ABSTRACT

*This article explores the intersection of death, life, and language through Hélène Cixous's Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe. Anchored in the anecdote of a scene where Victor Hugo reportedly heard a mysterious word from Shakespeare, the study analyzes Cixous's approach to the phantasmagorical, moving beyond a purely semiotic perspective. The paper examines some strategies for engaging with the ineffable through the lenses of Hauntology and a new perspective, Entology.*

KEYWORDS: Cixous, Derrida, negative discourse, spectre, hauntology, entology.

*Questo articolo esplora l'intersezione tra morte, vita e linguaggio attraverso Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe di Hélène Cixous. Basandosi su un episodio dell'opera in cui durante una seduta Victor Hugo avrebbe sentito una parola misteriosa da Shakespeare, lo studio analizza l'approccio di Cixous al fenomeno fantasmagorico, muovendo oltre una prospettiva solo semiotica. Il saggio esamina come affrontare l'ineffabile attraverso la lente dell'hauntology e di una nuova prospettiva d'analisi, l'entology.*

PAROLE CHIAVE: Cixous, Derrida, discorso negativo, spettro, hauntologia, entologia.

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## 1. Introduction

In 2022, Hélène Cixous published *Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe*,<sup>1</sup> a book whose main concern lies in the exploration of the interconnection between *death*, *life*, and *language*. Employing an obscure style characteristic of Cixous's work, these topics are addressed by invoking both real and literary ghosts. The former includes familiar names that Cixous recognizes and that can be easily identified through the biographical information she provides; the latter consists of characters from Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, Hugo's *The Last Day of a Condemned Man*, or Poe's *The Gold Bug*. The relationship established by the protagonist with the spectral voices that haunt her compels her to question the boundary between life and death and how each dimension communicates with the other. It is precisely at this intersection of the two realms that the author positions herself and writes the story.

This article seeks to examine the stylistic and linguistic mechanisms employed by the narrative voice in *Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe* by Hélène Cixous to facilitate the exchange of messages between the realms of life and death, allowing them to communicate despite belonging to distinct dimensions. To this end, a critical analysis of the text will be conducted, determining how the narrative voice engages with death and how death, in turn, interacts with her. This approach will allow us to assess whether Cixous's work aligns with the framework of Hauntology Studies or, as proposed by Marta Segarra, one of the leading experts in Cixous Studies, it should instead be understood through the lens of *Entology*,<sup>2</sup> a new theoretical paradigm that Cixous's novel may inaugurate. While Hauntology concerns itself with revenants, spectral entities that intrude upon the world of the living, Entology suggests the inverse: the incursion of the living into the realm of the dead. The following pages will explore this largely unexamined phenomenon, reconsidering its significance and theoretical implications within Cixous's book.

To this end, particular attention will be devoted to a pivotal scene that encapsulates this phenomenon: the episode from which the novel derives its title. This scene unfolds during a spiritism session between Victor Hugo and William Shakespeare, in which the French writer, after persistently urging the English playwright to communicate, purportedly receives the cryptic response "*Mdeilmm*". By interrogating *mdeilmm*, this study seeks to demonstrate how Cixous's linguistic choices forge a link with the magical, thereby facilitating access to the transcendental. This analysis will be anchored in the framework of negative

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. H. CIXOUS, *Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe*, Éditions Gallimard, Paris 2022.

<sup>2</sup> M. SEGARRA, *Voyage dans l'antarctique de la Mort – sur Mdeilmm de Hélène Cixou*, AOC Media, 2022, <https://aoc.media/critique/2022/12/11/voyage-dans-lantarctique-de-la-mort-sur-mdeilmm-de-helene-cixous/> [visited 4/02/2025].

discourse, engaging with the philosophical perspectives of Gerald Bruns, Jacques Derrida, and Giorgio Agamben to further elucidate the complexities of this phenomenon.

## 2. *Main elements of Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe*

### 2.1. *Death, ghosts and enchantment*

Already in the opening pages of *Mdeilmm*, the narrative voice confesses a deep sense of disturbance: «L'idée de la Mort m'avait prise en otage. Elle existe. Qui ? La Mort. L'idée».<sup>3</sup> A few lines later, this anxiety is further elaborated: «Je suis, comme ces poètes malades, ces poètes inspirés de maladie, occupée jusqu'à l'obsession par l'Idée de mes Morts, je suis frappé à l'âme, je suis comme mon oncle Freud poursuivi par une petite hantise qui le surprend n'importe à quel moment n'importe où et le ridiculise, c'est une manie, c'est un visitation chronique».<sup>4</sup> Within this context, works such as Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* come to the fore, as the protagonist obsessively rereads its passages: «Je me hâtai de consulter *L'Idiot*. Déjà l'idée de trouver un écho à mon angoisse agit comme une magie bénéfique».<sup>5</sup> The scene that captivates her most is the execution depicted in the Russian novel, particularly the way the event is narrated: «Dans ce récit si long si angoissé, si tremblant et écumant, on voit que le narrateur doit s'y reprendre plusieurs fois pour parvenir à achever l'exécution».<sup>6</sup>

In a sense, Cixous is drawn to the impossibility of narrating death, particularly the precise instant of death. A death that never fully arrives, leaving the narration itself in a state of agonizing suspension. «Que de temps il aura fallu entre 'il meurt' et 'il est meurt' et ensuite entre 'il est' et 'mort'»,<sup>7</sup> she wonders, revealing her deep engagement with language and its capacity to express ineffable realities.

On the one hand, Cixous interrogates her comprehension of death by exploring several approaches, yet always with the intention of glimpsing the precise moment just before expiration, as if this instant could contain the secret that preoccupies her: «Je dois absolument retourner en arrière dans le temps, quand on en était à l'instant d'avant la séparation, l'instant où tout se joue».<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, as if conducting fieldwork, she examines the last words uttered by the living, both literary and real examples, as they transition into death: «Je cherche obstinément les derniers mots,

<sup>3</sup> H. CIXOUS, *Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe* cit., p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Ivi, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Ivi, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Ivi, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Ivi, p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> Ivi, p. 37.

toutes ces clés que les sages et les saints nous ont laissées au moment du dernier des derniers souffles, à l'instant de la coupure, cet instant quand l'issue est encore indécise et déjà le Voyageur voit ce qu'il n'a encore jamais vu».<sup>9</sup> Within this context, for instance, she recalls the final words of Socrates before his death: «rappelle-toi, nous devons un coq à Esculape».<sup>10</sup>

Simultaneously, she begins to question alternative modes of perception that extend beyond linguistic faculty. That is, rather than solely seeking words capable of articulating reality through conventional vocabulary, she becomes particularly interested in auditory perception:

Je suivais la Mort. La Mort arrive. Elle met du temps. On ne la voit pas. On l'entend. Elle halète. Elle parle par râles, elle avance à grands râles. Parâles extra-humains. C'est ce qui nous fait peur : la non-forme, la présence insaisissable, le frôlement d'un vent froid, cette force qui chemine sans aspect.<sup>11</sup>

In a sense, Cixous seeks out death in order to let it speak. Not only the instant itself, but everything connected to that moment, the living-dead or the objects surrounding them, as she exclaims: «si la guillotine pouvait parler, dis-je».<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, in her approach death gradually infiltrates her life to such an extent that she begins to feel haunted, dispossessed of common reality: «J'attribue ces moments de hantise à la fréquentation excessive des morts»,<sup>13</sup> she states. This way, as the book progresses, and through her explorations of the liminal moment between life and death, the narrator induces herself into an intermediate, hallucinatory state in which she no longer fully belongs to any specific place. This becomes evident in the following passage: «Je ne rêvais pas, j'étais dans la chambre, je ne voyais pas comment en sortir, puisque j'avais perdu le temps. Je dis à ma fille : 'Je suis bloquée dans une hallucination hallucinante'. 'Tu me paraissais parfaitement normale' dit ma fille»,<sup>14</sup>. Later she adds: «Je ressens l'inquiétude la plus aiguë et cet état d'étrangeté honteuse qui m'incite à téléphoner à des personnes proches, supposant qu'elles ne sont que dans une réalité. J'ajoute que ces réalités jumelles où je suis seule sont conjointes et simultanées. J'y suis moi-même».<sup>15</sup> In this sense, she finds herself trapped in a reality that has now split in two, one that remains imperceptible to others.

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<sup>9</sup> Ivi, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> Ivi, p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> Ivi, p. 31.

<sup>12</sup> Ivi, p. 39.

<sup>13</sup> Ivi, p. 70.

<sup>14</sup> Ivi, p. 99.

<sup>15</sup> Ivi, p. 100.

## 2.2. *The Failed Attempt to Express Enchantment*

It is from this new state that the narrator attempts, unsuccessfully, to explain this liminal moment. «Racontez-moi, me disait mon médecin».<sup>16</sup> The narrator then proceeds to elaborate:

Aussitôt je me mis en devoir de raconter. Les mots encercleraient la deuxième réalité et lui passeraient les rênes. J'en étais convaincue. Je veux raconter ce qui vient de se passer, à la minute, ce qui vient de passer là, ma langue prête, ce qui arrive, j'avance un mot à l'instant il file, ça s'effiloche, c'est encore là, juste devant moi, je m'y reprends. Un mot s'avance et part d'un bond en sens contraire. C'est insaisissable, ça va trop vite, c'est parti, comme un rêve qui se tire. Des heures, en vain.<sup>17</sup>

The narrator fails to express herself, to make herself understood. From this failure, she changes her strategy, allowing the dead to speak, since she is unable to do so herself. The dead who live with her: «Toutes mes amies sont parties. Comme je les ai oubliées. Les oublis accompagnent ma Solitude. Ma Solitude prend la parole».<sup>18</sup> It is interesting how the narrator addresses her cohabitation with these hallucinatory voices: «Après leur dissipation, elles laissent les jambes faibles une fatigue pèse dans tout l'espace corporel».<sup>19</sup> Here, Cixous establishes another way of relating to these spectral voices, in spatial and corporeal terms.

In this attempt to listen to the dead and their words, the central moment of the work unfolds: the spectral scene between Victor Hugo and Shakespeare.

## 2.3. *Mdeilmm* and the spectral language

Amid the voices that assault the narrative voice, an explanation begins of an event that took place on January 22, 1854. It describes the spiritism session organized by Victor Hugo. During this session, the narrator explains the contact with William Shakespeare and the supposed word the English writer communicated when asked to speak. «C'est la première fois que j'entends une parole en fantôme. Je ne suis pas certaine de l'écrire correctement»,<sup>20</sup> the narrator claims after receiving the following message: "mdeilmm," which she considers a 'phantasmagorical word' [*parole en fantôme*].

<sup>16</sup> Ivi, p. 101.

<sup>17</sup> Ivi, p. 101.

<sup>18</sup> Ivi, p. 103.

<sup>19</sup> Ivi, p. 104.

<sup>20</sup> Ivi, p. 109.

What becomes significant here is the questioning that she shortly afterward raises regarding its status as a word: «D'où vient, dis-je à mon fils, que la résistance indéniable qu'offre ce mot – si c'est-un-mot – à l'assimilation par le commun des usages dont nous sommes, ne trouble aucunement les quatre interlocuteurs». <sup>21</sup> As for the questioning of its possible status as a word («si c'est-un-mot»), what becomes intriguing is the second definition that Cixous provides for “mdeilmm”: «objet sonore dont les vibrations s'annoncent incalculables». <sup>22</sup> Far from being a trivial clarification, the introduction of the sonorous as a new perspective for approaching the phenomenon shifts the initial emphasis from its status as a word to a focus on its sound, emphasizing an alternative perception and understanding of its message. This is made clearer when Cixous asserts: «Quand 'Shakespeare' innombrable sous son nom dit Mdeilmm il n'écrit pas, il parle. Ensuite il faut arriver à écrire», <sup>23</sup> highlighting its original sonorous nature, rather than viewing writing as the privileged means to approach it. Therefore, what becomes crucial in the analysis of “mdeilmm” could precisely be the sound, as it introduces a new modality for deciphering the phantasmagorical message.

As Cixous previously stated, interpreting “mdeilmm” as a word is problematic due to its ambiguity in terms of linguistic classification and identifiable content. Given this complexity, it seems more fruitful to explore alternative modalities for engaging with phantasmagorical language within this context. Building on Cixous's text, the following pages will interpret this stylistic choice through the lens of negative discourse, illustrating how it emphasizes not only the sonorous but also the spatial implications of the message. This approach opens new avenues for ascribing meaning to ineffable messages. Through this exploration, we can better understand how Cixous uses “mdeilmm” to challenge traditional linguistic boundaries and create novel possibilities for making meaning in the liminal space between life and death.

### 3. *Negative Discourse: Approaching “Mdeilmm”*

According to Gerald Bruns, negative discourse is «a form of speech which attempts to isolate the act of signification from its results, that is, from the formation of a signified». <sup>24</sup> A clear example of this can be found in poetry, where, despite the failure of logic in evoking what the poet wants to express, the inadequacy that

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<sup>21</sup> Ivi, p. 113.

<sup>22</sup> Ivi, p. 114.

<sup>23</sup> Ivi, p. 122.

<sup>24</sup> G. BRUNS, *Negative Discourse and the moment before speak: A metaphysics of Literary Language in Modern poetry and the idea of Language*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven 1974, p. 193.

emerges as a result becomes a source of new meaning. Thus, the value of negative speech lies in its liberation from its initial function. What becomes relevant is not the direct message it emanates, but what is revealed from the unspeakable aspect of this incongruity, and which nonetheless brings the poeticized reality into being. Put differently, in negative discourse what is important is not the signified itself, but an activity that goes beyond meaning to engage with the word itself, thereby abolishing the world of signified.<sup>25</sup> In accordance with it, what becomes important for us now is not the possible shared meaning of “mdeilmm”, but the potential of its acoustic image.

This becomes evident from the following passage: «Je suivais la Mort. La Mort arrive. Elle met du temps. On ne la voit pas. On l’entend». What is important here is the phrase «we hear it», as it is fundamental for understanding how the author intuitively perceives the manifestation of death in its various forms. The question, then, is: what is heard? The narrator presents the following: «Elle halète. Elle parle par râles, elle avance à grands râles. Parâles extra-humains. C’est ce qui nous fait peur : la non-forme, la présence insaisissable, le frôlement d’un vent froid, cette force qui chemine sans aspect».<sup>26</sup> According to her, what is heard is a wheeze [*râle*], a panting [*halètement*], creating what she calls “Parâles extra-humains”, an expression that plays with the French words for “word” [*parole*] and “wheeze” [*râle*]. This reasoning would lead the narrator to interpret an otherworldly, breathless voice, the sound of which represents the closest possibility to hearing death or the way death could manifest itself within the human realm.

Continuing with the concept of negative discourse, Giorgio Agamben’s conception of voice, which he defines as the original negative articulation of discourse,<sup>27</sup> provides further clarity. Agamben describes the voice as a meaningless pre-verbal discourse.<sup>28</sup> In this case, the voice represents the ultimate reversal of discourse, a sound devoid of content, but meaningful in itself. This framework is particularly relevant in the case of *mdeilmm*, as it allows for its interpretation not as a conventional discourse or a mere sound, but rather as a disruptive voice, a groan or a murmur, which serves as the solution, the work presents for establishing communication between worlds. This idea becomes so central that it even shapes the title of the work: «Je devrais appeler ce livre Mdeilmm»,<sup>29</sup> a notion that, as the story indicates, the publisher is hesitant about: «Le problème, dit l’éditeur, c’est

<sup>25</sup> Ivi, p. 206.

<sup>26</sup> Ivi, p.31.

<sup>27</sup> G. AGAMBEN, *Language and death: The place of negativity*, University of Minnesota Press, Oxford 1982, pp. 37-39.

<sup>28</sup> Ivi, p. 48.

<sup>29</sup> H. CIXOUS, *Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe* cit., p. 110.



qu'on n'arrive pas à le prononcer. – Mon éditeur réfléchit. Est-ce un mot ?». <sup>30</sup> The sound becomes an indecipherable intruder for humans, which, as the narrator points out, is nevertheless significant: «J'aime Mdeilmm. Mdeilmm n'est pas un accident neurologique. Mdeilmm a existé». <sup>31</sup> It is the very fact that *mdeilmm* has existed for the narrator that transforms it into a testimony of what is described in the text as «une collision entre deux langues», <sup>32</sup> a phenomenon that resists a decipherable etymology.

The indecipherability of the message, which might seem to lead us down a dead-end, raises the question of what to do with such a message, despite the fascination of the phenomenon. Yet, the author appears to find a way forward. The narrator says, referring to *mdeilmm*:

Ce mot nous fait parler. Il bouge. Il provoque, bouscule. C'est du déséquilibre. Je vacille. Pendant un temps Hugo est envoûté par sa marionnette. Ça arrive. Quand on est envoûté on ne sait pas qu'on est envoûté. On s'envoûte. Il suffit d'un mot. Le mot ensorçèle son disant. Le disant pense penser. Il pense, il ne pense pas. Le mot remue sur la table. Il fait bouger. Mdeilmm me fait marcher. Il est en déséquilibre. J'écris déséquilibre. Pas déséquilibre. Je m'appuie sur un grand nombre de gens différents, tant de pieds et regards, c'est ce qui me pousse, me fait avancer me donne les vertiges [*bold mine*]. <sup>33</sup>

In light of this, Cixous finds not in the message itself but in the phenomenon, it provokes, its incongruity. The phantasmagorical sound and its noise captivate the human ear and move it, both mentally and physically. It is as if the very word *mdeilmm* has the power to become a spell, immobilizing or physically unbalancing the subject who hears it. This experience resonates with the physical state the narrative voice finds itself in after the constant recollection of the ghosts, both familial and literary, that visit her: «Je suis bloquée dans une hallucination hallucinante». <sup>34</sup>

This debate on the hallucination or enchantment resulting from the intimate connection between human life and death, and vice versa, raises the question of whether Cixous aligns with the Hauntological movement or, as Marta Segarra suggests, introduces a new field: Entology. This issue will be explored in the following section.

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<sup>30</sup> Ivi, p. 111.

<sup>31</sup> Ivi, p. 112.

<sup>32</sup> Ivi, p. 113.

<sup>33</sup> Ivi, p. 121.

<sup>34</sup> Ivi, p. 99.



#### 4. *Hauntology vs. Entology: Revisiting the Relationship Between Life and Death in Mdeilmm: Parole de Taupe*

Hauntology or Spectrality Studies has its inspiration in Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx*.<sup>35</sup> In it, he revolutionized our perception of Ontology, suggesting that our existence is haunted by unresolved pasts, or what he called *specters*. Briefly, Derrida, by introducing this hauntological and spectral dynamic, opened a new way of analyzing our potentialities of being and expression. Additionally, one major development of Derrida's work is the identification of the ethical consequences of the unique temporality of the spectre, and it is this new means of engaging with the spectral alterity of the other. Certainly, the framework of spectrality and the figure of the spectre as a motif of inquiry was not initiated by Derrida; before him, the Psychoanalytic School had already begun research on this temporal and mimetic paradox. However, while the psychoanalytic tradition tended to assume that the phantom's secret could be revealed, Derrida, on the contrary, viewed the spectre's secret as a productive opening of meaning rather than a determinate content to be uncovered. As Derrida argued, instead of talking about the Spectre, discussing with it, or speaking to it, he advocated for making or letting the spirit speak and offering welcome.<sup>36</sup>

This hauntological perspective closely aligns with the strategy employed by Cixous in her work, as the book clearly presents a protagonist haunted by spectres.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the narrative voice's approach to spectres is not invasive, as it does not seek to uncover their message. A clear example of this is the way she relates to *mdeilmm*,<sup>38</sup> whose meaning remains open.

As already mentioned, Hauntology is the defiance of the traditional way of understanding the study of being. In the case of Cixous's work, what is haunted is not only the listener of "mdeilmm", the narrative voice that is submerged psychologically in a displaced state by the phenomenon of enchantment, but also the received message. A message that finds itself waiting to be deciphered, but in its impossibility becomes an absolutely indeterminate messianic promise that wants to

<sup>35</sup> J. DERRIDA, *Specters of Marx*, Routledge, New York 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Ivi, p. 221.

<sup>37</sup> See: «Je suis, comme ces poètes malades, ces poètes inspirés de maladie, occupée jusqu'à l'obsession par l'Idée de mes Morts, je suis frappée à l'âme, je suis comme mon oncle Freud poursuivi par une petite hantise qui le surprend n'importe à quel moment n'importe où et le ridiculise, c'est une manie, c'est une visitation chronique». H. CIXOUS, *Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe* cit., p. 21.

<sup>38</sup> See: «Est-ce un mot ? Un nom propre ? – Prudent. Hospitaliser. – Un migrant ? Il y a tant de vocables venus de tant de langes en transit dans la langue française. Ou un de ces vestiges d'une religion dont les dieux n'ont pas fait long feu ? Prononce-t-on chaque lettre l'une après l'autre ? – Ça se prononce d'un souffle, dis-je, ce n'est qu'une syllabe. Mdeilmm. – Un intrus, un crachat d'Artaud, on ne se sait jamais. C'est peut-être une clé trouvée dans une bouteille d'Edgar Poe». Ivi, p. 111.

be revealed but never fulfilled. This indeterminacy leads Cixous to state: «Mdeilmm n'est pas fini, ne finit pas».<sup>39</sup> And if it never ends, it is precisely because it fails to reveal itself in its entirety. This places it in a state of absent-presence, which is typically spectral, immersed in a disjointed perception of time – both temporally and spatially dislocated. As a result, its compatibility and communication with the realm of the living become profoundly complex.

However, Marta Segarra, in contrast to Hauntology, in her article *Voyage dans l'antarctique de la Mort – sur Mdeilmm de Hélène Cixous* (2022) argues that «Hélène Cixous inaugure ici une 'entologie' où la Vie se greffe à la Mort, et inversement», further adding that «le parti pris de celle-ci <pour la vie> n'est tel qu'à condition que la vie inclue aussi la mort, ou les morts».<sup>40</sup> This consideration appears promising, but the scholar provides no further explanation of the idea, leaving the reader with a sense of confusion and a lack of clarity.

As seen, Cixous's book is an intersection of expressions from both the living and the dead. Yet, at its core, it remains a ghost story, something Segarra herself acknowledges: «Mdeilmm est 'une histoire de spectres'».<sup>41</sup> The proposal of an *Entology* suggests that the novel moves beyond the mere presence of ghosts haunting the narrative voice. In other words, the crucial aspect is not the spectres themselves, but rather the narrator's active engagement in seeking them out and, ultimately, achieving an ethical form of coexistence, similar to what Derrida was also pursuing.

The aim of this article is not to dismiss either approach, Hauntology or Entology, but rather to understand them as complementary. The narrative voice is haunted; in this sense, it is a clear example of a hauntological experience, as spectres pursue her throughout the novel, blurring the boundaries between two realities that merge into one,<sup>42</sup> the nature of which remains unclear: «je ne suis pas 'allée' je m'y suis trouvée abandonnée. N'étant pas allé je ne savais pas comment revenir».<sup>43</sup> This experience shapes her ontological state, as the traces of the dead disrupt her understanding of reality. At the same time, despite the narrator's initial confusion, there is no explicit rejection of the phenomenon, nor does it result in madness or despair. On the contrary, and this is where the concept of Entology becomes

<sup>39</sup> Ivi, p. 169.

<sup>40</sup> Cfr. M. SEGARRA, *Voyage dans l'antarctique de la Mort – sur Mdeilmm de Hélène Cixous* cit.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> See : «Je suis dans deux réalités, l'une est plus colorée que l'autre, l'autre est un peu *passée*, ténue, mais sincère, véridique. C'est cette légère pâleur qui m'amène à l'appeler *l'autre*. Mais peut-être l'autre n'est elle pas l'autre de l'une. Cependant c'est dans la dite *l'une* que je ressens l'inquiétude la plus aiguë et cet état d'étrangeté honteuse qui m'incite à téléphoner à des personnes proches, supposant qu'elles ne sont que dans une réalité. J'ajoute que ces réalités jumelles où je suis seule sont conjointes et simultanées. J'y suis moi-même ». H. CIXOUS, *Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe* cit., p. 100.

<sup>43</sup> Ivi, p. 102.

particularly promising, the novel presents a process of reconciliation<sup>44</sup> and acceptance<sup>45</sup> of their presence. In this sense, while the work neither seeks to dispel the ghosts nor decipher them as strange messages from another realm but rather views them as constitutive of the same realities, it does generate a certain hauntologisation of the subject. In fact, it is through her hauntologisation that reconciliation becomes possible, or rather, the integration of death as constitutive. The characters that appear in the story, with whom the narrative voice shares her altered state, do not recognize this double reality; they cannot identify death as part of common existence, even if the dialogue that the narrative voice has with other mortals makes them, through her observations, participants in her new reality. All this leads us to conclude that both Hauntology and Entology describe the process experienced by the narrative voice, with the understanding that the former is possible because the latter takes place.

In conclusion, *Mdeilm: Parole de taupe* proposes an alternative relationship with the spectres that invade the memory and the existence of the living. Avoiding any consideration of madness, while alluding to the hallucinatory state in which the narrator exists, the focus is placed on the coexistence of the two realities, the living and the dead, acknowledging the intricate relationship between these dimensions. This relationship, as seen according to the text, is only possible if the characters find themselves in a certain altered ontological state. Far from considering this altered ontology a weakness, Cixous reframes it as a source of strength, as it enables an alternative mode of relation, one that, as previously examined in relation to *Mdeilm* as a message, is intrinsically perceptive and sensorial, capable of embracing otherness, that is, what lies beyond the boundaries of traditional frameworks. In other words, it fosters the creation of new ethics, a new way to relate otherness. This is where Derrida's closing words in *Specters of Marx* become illuminating in this context, as if Cixous's text serves as a continuation of the task he proclaimed:

By learning not how to make conversation with the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech, even if it is in oneself, in the other, in the other in oneself: they are always there, specters, even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet. They give us to rethink the "there" as soon as we open our mouths.<sup>46</sup>

Cixous not only interrogates this *there* by introducing a dual reality between life and death but also reappropriates the words of the dead as real entities: «J'aime

<sup>44</sup> See : «Il faut des morts, et leur consentement. Eve ne marchera jamais. C'est pour cela que je l'adore». Ivi, p. 170.

<sup>45</sup> See : «les morts, qui ne sont rien sans nous, sont nos maîtres». Ivi, p. 118.

<sup>46</sup> J. DERRIDA, *Specters of Marx* cit., p. 221.

Mdeilmm. Mdeilmm n'est pas un accident neurologique. Mdeilmm a existé».<sup>47</sup> This is how she gives voice to the specter, acknowledging it as a constitutive reality of both the world and the being it haunts.

Thus, this article has examined the contrast between Hauntology and Entology within the work by Hélène Cixous: *Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe*, as well as analysed, through a critical textual approach, the way in which the narrative voice interacts with spectral entities and their messages. The findings open up a new way of engaging with memory and its expressions, which become meaningful through other sensory channels that transcend the rational discourse.

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<sup>47</sup> H. Cixous, *Mdeilmm: Parole de taupe* cit., p. 112.